

Introduced by Senator Corbett

March 9, 2010

Senate Resolution No. 39—Relative to Irish American Heritage Month.

1 WHEREAS, Millions of Irish people, faced with severe hardship
2 due to famine and poverty in their nation, immigrated to the United
3 States over the last several centuries in search of a more promising
4 future for themselves and their families; and
5 WHEREAS, Irish Americans initially suffered prejudice and
6 discrimination upon first arriving in the United States. As the years
7 went on, Irish Americans became very involved in the community
8 and made numerous contributions in all aspects of American
9 society and culture, especially in California; and
10 WHEREAS, Irish Americans played vital roles in the
11 development of the United States. Nine Irish Americans were
12 signers of the Declaration of Independence, and 20 Presidents of
13 the United States have been of Irish heritage, including John F.
14 Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama; and
15 WHEREAS, Many people of Irish descent have contributed to
16 great movements that have helped to shape our country and its
17 role in the world, including Mother Jones, labor activist; Lucy
18 Burns, activist in the Women’s Movement; and Senator George
19 Mitchell, negotiator of the Irish Peace Accord; and
20 WHEREAS, Irish Americans have also played a major role in
21 California politics. Many governors, legislative leaders, city
22 mayors, and other public officials who have shaped the
23 development of California over the years have been of Irish
24 descent; and

1 WHEREAS, Irish Americans were significantly involved in the
2 development of infrastructure throughout the United States,
3 especially in California. This included work on railroads and
4 bridges that connected the West to the East. The Irish were also
5 instrumental in the building of dams, roads, canals, and buildings
6 that expanded greatly in the late 1800s; and

7 WHEREAS, Many Irish Americans have made their mark as
8 peace officers and firefighters, and have risked or lost their lives
9 on countless occasions in carrying out their duties; and

10 WHEREAS, Irish Americans have served with distinction in
11 every war that this nation has fought. Many outstanding soldiers
12 who fought for American freedom in the Revolutionary War were
13 of Irish descent. Since then, Irish Americans have sacrificed their
14 lives in every other war in which the United States has fought; and

15 WHEREAS, Many Irish Americans have contributed greatly to
16 the United States economy in business, including Henry Ford;
17 Alexander Stewart, the inventor of the American department store;
18 Cathleen Black, president of Hearst Publishing; Jack Welch, former
19 president and chief executive officer of General Electric; and Herb
20 Kelleher, cofounder of Southwest Airlines; and

21 WHEREAS, Irish Americans have contributed to the field of
22 science, including astronaut Michael Collins, first female
23 commander of a Space Shuttle Eileen Collins, physicist and Nobel
24 Laureate Charles Townes, and bioengineer and MacArthur Fellow
25 James Collins; and

26 WHEREAS, Irish Americans have contributed to the American
27 literary tradition through great authors, including Flannery
28 O'Connor, Eugene O'Neill, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Mary McCarthy,
29 Tom Clancy, and Frank McCourt; and

30 WHEREAS, Irish Americans have contributed to American
31 entertainment through such stars as actors Jack Nicholson, John
32 Wayne, and George Clooney; actor and comedian Bill Murray;
33 actress Grace Kelly; actress and comedian Rosie O'Donnell; actor
34 and singer Bing Crosby; actresses and singers Rosemary Clooney
35 and Judy Garland; comedian Conan O'Brien; and actor and director
36 Edward Burns being of Irish heritage; and

37 WHEREAS, Today, over 44 million Americans claim Irish
38 heritage, and they continue to contribute to the American and
39 Californian political, economic, and cultural landscapes; now,
40 therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California*, That the
2 Senate, in honor of the multitude of contributions that Irish
3 Americans have made to make this a better country and state for
4 all people, designates March 2010 to be Irish American Heritage
5 Month in California and calls upon the people of the state to
6 observe the month of March with appropriate ceremonies,
7 programs, and activities, especially on March 17, since everyone
8 is Irish on St. Patrick's Day; and be it further
9 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
10 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.